

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL STATIONS AND VOLUNTEER OBSERVERS.

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APRIL, 1927: BRIGHT PERIODS, FINE AND WARM 18TH TO 21ST; LAST WEEK COLD BUT SUNNY.

General.—An unsettled period early in the month with frequent rain and showers of hail, sleet and snow, fine warm weather from the 18th to the 21st and cold weather with severe local ground frost during the last week of the month, were the main features of the weather of April.

During the first nine days of April, the passage of depressions across the British Isles maintained an unsettled type of weather generally with moderate temperature, winds between south and north-west and alternating rainy and bright periods with showers of hail and, in northern districts, snow. In northern and western districts strong winds reaching gale force in exposed places were experienced on the 4th, 5th and 6th. In south-eastern districts the 7th was decidedly cold and wet. As a depression over southern England and the Channel moved slowly eastwards, northerly winds and cold showery weather set in over the British Isles on the 9th; in London thunderstorms accompanied by heavy hail occurred. Northerly winds, lower temperatures and mainly fair weather prevailed for a few days, but as the anticyclone off the west of Ireland moved southwards, winds became more westerly and on the 13th and 14th temperature rose to about 60°F. in southern England. In Scotland fairly heavy rainfall was general around about the 13th and in the south of England rain fell generally during the night of the 14th-15th.

Westerly winds and variable weather prevailed generally on the 15th and 16th, but associated with an anticyclone to the south of British Isles conditions improved on the 17th and on the 18th., fairer warmer weather prevailed over most of the British Isles, day temperatures exceeding 65°F. in some parts of London. From the 18th to the 21st fine warm weather was experienced in all districts, day temperature rising locally above 70°F. on the 21st.

In the rear of a depression which passed north-eastwards towards Scandinavia on the 22nd, the winds became more northerly and during the last week of the month extremely cold but sunny weather with showers of hail, snow or sleet prevailed in Scotland and northern England. In the southern districts the maximum temperature at several stations did not exceed 50°F. on the 26th, the weather during the closing days of the month being characterised by sunny weather, moderate day temperatures and cold nights.

The following remarks taken from observers' notes illustrate the character of the weather of the month:—Southport—An exceptionally westerly and north-westerly April with a remarkable scarcity of easterly winds, small daily range of temperature, light rainfall but singularly numerous rain-days. West Kirby—A month of variable weather. Bitterly cold with wintry showers of hail and snow at the close. Newport (I. of W.)—Fine and dry with remarkably low humidity towards the end of the month. Teignmouth—Unsettled to the 8th, then mainly fair with N. to N.W. winds. The 21st was the warmest April day since at least 1903. Cork—A dry month with light winds principally between N.W. and S.W. There were a few visitations of heavy frost towards the end of the month.

Pressure and Winds.—Monthly means of pressure were in general below the normal in Scotland, the northern districts of England, Wales and Ireland and above the normal in the southern districts. The trend of the isobars favoured north-westerly to westerly winds. There was a notable absence of easterly winds.

High winds reaching gale force in exposed places occurred on several days during the first week of the month and on the 22nd, 23rd, 25th and 27th. The highest gust recorded at an anemograph station during April was 66 mi/hr. at Pendennis Castle (near Falmouth); it occurred during the gale on the night of March 31st to April 1st, but was exceeded during the same gale by a gust of 71 mi/hr. which, however, occurred at 23h. 50m. on March 31st.

Temperature.—The mean temperature of Districts 1-10 was 45.8°F. and was 0.3°F. above the normal. The mean temperature was above the normal in most English Districts and in Ireland and below the normal in Scotland, but departures from the normal were mostly slight; the largest excess from normal, 1.7°F., occurred in England E. (mean temperature 47.3°F.) and the largest deficit, 1.4°F., in Scotland N. (mean temperature 41.5°F.).

There were frequent occurrences of ground frost. The ground frosts which occurred widely during the last week of the month were unusually severe for the time of year. The observer at Totland Bay states that the frost which occurred during the night of April 26th

to 27th (screen minimum, 31.6°F.) is the latest screen frost recorded there in 41 years. A grass minimum temperature as low as 11°F. was recorded at Renfrew on the 28th and at Balmoral on the 29th.

The extreme temperatures for the month were:—(England and Wales) 73°F. at Waltham-on-Aze, Enfield, Deal and Cullompton on the 21st, 22°F. at Bellingham on the 28th and at Mayfield, Wistanstow, Perdiswell and Usk on the 30th; (Scotland) 65°F. at Aberdeen on the 17th, 17°F. at Balmoral on the 29th; (Ireland) 70°F. at Kilkenny on the 20th, 24°F. at Markree Castle on the 30th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the normal for the period 1881-1915 was 107; the values for the constituent countries were:—England and Wales 107, Scotland 145, Ireland 69. The value for Ireland is the lowest recorded in April since 1921.

Monthly totals of precipitation showed considerable variation. Thus in parts of Sutherlandshire the total precipitation for the month amounted to fully three times the normal and in Anglesey and over a large area of the south of Ireland to less than half the normal. In most districts of England and Wales and Ireland little rain of any importance fell after the 9th.

In Scotland rainfall totals were appreciably below the normal in some eastern and southern districts but over the greater part of the country there was an excess, notably in parts of Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty, Inverness and the Hebrides and Orkney.

In England and Wales monthly totals of precipitation were less than the normal in some northern, north-western and south-western districts and in parts of east Anglia.

In Ireland precipitation exceeded the normal over a small area to the north-west: in some southern districts there was a marked deficiency; thus Cahirciveen had only 38 per cent. of the normal and Killarney 39 per cent.

Hail showers occurred frequently during the month occasionally in association with thunderstorms. During the thunderstorms in London on the 9th heavy hail fell at Hampstead and according to the observer's report lay 1 inch thick on the ground and in drifts to a depth of 3 inches. During the unsettled early portion of the month and during the cold last week of the month snow fell on several occasions in northern districts. In Shetland and some northern districts of Scotland including Morayshire conditions between the 25th and 27th amounted to a blizzard and the storm is reported to have been one of the worst on record. A notable fall of snow occurred on the evening of the 30th in the Lothians. At Lairg on the 30th snow lay to a depth of 7 inches.

Sunshine.—The mean daily duration of sunshine was above the normal in Scotland E. and England N.E. and S.E., notably in England S.E., and in the Midland Counties; in the remaining Districts it was below the normal.

Although the early part of April was generally rainy and unsettled there were considerable bright periods, abundant sunshine being recorded in Ireland and southern Scotland during the week ending April 9th. The period April 16th to the 21st was unusually sunny in the eastern and south-eastern districts of England while the last few days of the month were sunny generally, between 13 hours and 13½ hours sunshine being recorded at a number of stations in the south and east of England on the 30th. The total duration of sunshine expressed as a percentage of the possible total for April amounted to 53 per cent. at Ventnor (Isle of Wight), to 51 per cent. at Margate and Worthing and to 50 per cent. at Eastbourne.

Fog.—Apart from some local fog, mostly in coastal regions, on the 4th and 5th and during the third week of the month, little fog was reported during the month.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Halos of 22° were observed at several places on various dates. A halo of 22° with well developed upper and lower arcs of contact was observed at Croydon, Oxford, South Farborough and Richmond (Kew Observatory) in the forenoon of April 2nd. A halo of 46° with upper arc of contact and parhelion was observed at Oxford on the 5th. Aurora was observed at Wick on the 1st and 2nd, at Baltasound on the 1st, 2nd and 29th, at Stornoway on the 7th, at Gordon Castle on the 20th and at Inchkeith on the 24th and 29th. "Auroral glows" were observed at Lerwick Observatory on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 9th, 15th and 22nd.